Inclination for Basic Sciences

2049. SHRI RAJA RAMANNA : Will the MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many students are now not opting for basic sciences and this could lead to deterioration in improving the technology eventually; and

(b) whether it has been suggested that a scheme be worked out whereby gifted students are selected and given scholarships to continue their studies of basic sciences and their progress is watched, so that they can be provided suitable positions in the national labs and other scientific institutions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA) : (a) and (b) There is no report about students not opting science courses at Senior Secondary stage. However, to encourage students to continue their education in basic sciences at higher education level, a scheme called Kishore Vaigyanik Prothsahan Yojana (KVPY) has been launched during 1999-2000 by Department of Science and Technology which targets the young science students at the school and college level. It aims to encourage the students of basic sciences, engineering and medicine to take up research career in these areas. The KVPY strives to assist carefully selected students to realise their potential and to ensure that the best scientific talent is tapped for R&D in the country. These students are provided scholarships (upto pre-Ph.D. level). The Government has awarded 80 fellowships during 1999-2000 and 86 fellowships during 2000-2001. The proposal for providing suitable positions in national labs and academic institutions to these fellows is currently under discussion.

National Policy for Empowerment of Women

2050. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that workplace is no cakewalk for women, and the NDA Government's latest National Policy for Empowerment of Women notwithstanding, India's huge female work force continues to receive a raw deal across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government have taken so far or propose to take to safeguard against exploitation of women, to protect their honour, and to ensure them remunerative salaries, in view of the fact that women are a vulnerable section of the workforce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) Since independence, considerable improvement has been achieved in the standards and opportunities for wage employment and self employment, social security, health care, training and skill upgradation for women. However, issues like ensuring strict implementation of labour laws such as Equal Remuneration Act and Minimum Wages Act etc., in the unorganized sector, strengthening of women's rights at workplace, increasing the outreach of community based economic programmes to rural women and urban informal sector etc. are some areas of concern. Recently, the Department of Women and Child Development constituted a Task Force to review the provisions of these laws with a view to ensure its better implementation.

(c) The Government has adopted the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with a view to ensure equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic spheres.

The year 2001 is being observed as Women's empowerment Year to focus on women specific issues and to accelerate action thereon to enable women to take their rightful place in the mainstream and participation in the nation's development.

There are special protective provisions prohibiting/regulating the working conditions of women workers in various statutes. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides for equal wages for men and women for same or similar nature of work. The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 provides for minimum wages to women workers without any discrimination.

The Supreme Court of India has laid down detailed guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment of women at the workplace in its judgement dated 13-8-1997 in the case of Vishaka Vs. State of Rajasthan. Government has taken a number of initiatives to give effect to these guidelines, which have the force of law under Article 141 of the Constitution of India. These include writing to various Central Ministries, Central Public Sector Undertakings, State

Governments/UTs and All India Employers and Employees Organisations to set up Complaints Committees, to be headed by women for redressal of complaints arising out of sexual harassment of women at their workplace. As per information available, most organisations have set up Complaints Committees in their organisations. Amendments have also been made to the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 so that sexual harassment of women at workplace in the private sector could constitute an offence for which a workman is liable for disciplinary action.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is in the process of reviewing the laws affecting women with a view to remove provisions in them which may be discriminatory to women.

National Nutrition Mission

2051. SHRI KHAGEN DAS : Will the MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to establish National Nutrition Mission;

(b) if so, what would be its composition;

(c) what are its objectives; and

(d) by when it would be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The establishment of National Nutrition Mission is at formative stage. Its details have not yet been finalised.

Undertaakings for Senior Professors/Reades in CHIs

2052. SHRI LAJPAT RAI : Will the MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that Senior Professors/Readers in Central Hindi Institutes are forced to sign an undertaking when posted to Delhi/Hyderabad, to the effect that they would not claim for inchargeship;